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Recruitment Tip: Re-energizing Burned-Out Volunteers

Do you have lackluster performance by volunteers who have just given up? Consider this ten-point checklist to help you get going again.

1. Volunteers are often recruited with the warm body method. Anyone with a pulse qualifies for membership. Consider identifying the skills you need and then systematically finding the right people with the motivation and work ethic. For example-If you need Public Relations skills- go to their professional association.

2. Have you structured achievable job descriptions? Or are the tasks unrealistic or too much of a stretch given the resources at hand? Make sure that people can succeed at their job. Orient and train them. Especially when you want them to do a job they have never done before.

3. Consider restructuring how the volunteers work. Many volunteer that work at their child's school are often working on more than one committee. Allow them to design their work, or catch up on meetings through email, fax, or other methods. Consider limiting meetings, or schedule them at different times.

4. Listen and adapt. Meet with key volunteers and ask them what should be changed about their job description. Ask them if they would continue their participation after you make the changes they recommend.

5. Expand your pool of volunteers. Ask existing volunteers to bring a friend, or ask managers to recruit their staff. Consider hosting a recruitment party/

fair where everyone has lots of fun, talking about why they enjoy about volunteering for the organization. Let them know the rewards of volunteering firsthand from those who volunteer.

6. There are many ways to accomplish one task. Allow volunteers to design their own work, providing they meet the required parameters set by management. When individuals are delegated responsibility, they often step up to the challenge.

7. Give them a rest! Sometimes volunteers just need a new job, or some time off. Respect their wishes and agree to meet with them at a certain time in the future when you can see how they are doing.

8. Be consistent. If you have rules, make them apply to everyone. Sometimes volunteers get upset when they see the rules are bent because someone in the agency has more political clout.

9. Provide choices. Some schools have a fundraising or volunteer requirement. Many parents would rather donate, either because they do not have the time, or because of personal choice. Set the bar high enough and provide this option for those who do not wish to become a volunteer.

10. Allow volunteers to job share. Many schools and organizations now allow co-chairs for many committees. And although the work will probably never be distributed 50/50, at least you may be able to recruit some individuals who have the skills and interest, but need to know that they will have support if they need it.

— Dr. Charity News



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Beverly Leneski, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Ann Arbor, Michigan; **Celine Jalbert**, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Manchester, New Hampshire; **Sharon Croteau**, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Dayton, Ohio and **Sabrina Clark**, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Baltimore, Maryland, for passing the American Society Directors of Voluntary Service (ASDVS). **Isabel Hall**, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Mountain Home, Tennessee, recently completed the Mid-South Healthcare Network Leadership 2003 program.

Congratulations to **Deborah Thomas**, Voluntary Service Program Manager, VAMC, Jackson, Mississippi, on her recent promotion.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2003, VA Medical Center, Louisville, Kentucky, **Rex Robley**, a World War I veteran, who was recognized for being the oldest living "working" veteran volunteer age of 102. Great job Mr. Robley.

Calendar

- * **VISN Liaison Conference Call, December 10, 2003**
- * **Hanukkah, December 16, 2003**
- * **First Day of Winter, December 22, 2003**
- * **Christmas Day, December 25, 2003**



The 5 Major Time Wasters

1. **Spreading yourself** too thin by trying to do too many things at once. *Suggestion:* You must set priorities for each day and, if necessary, each hour. Get the most important things done first.
2. **Being afraid** to delegate. *Suggestion:* Convince yourself that it's not necessary to do everything yourself. You can still be certain things are being done the way you want them to be when you delegate.
3. **Not wanting** to say "no" to requests. *Suggestion:* You can't say "yes" to everything without getting in over your head. Decide what you *must* do—and *want* to do—and say "no" to all other requests.
4. **Being tied** to the phone. *Suggestions:* Have others screen your calls. Use an answering machine when you don't want to be disturbed. Schedule a telephone hour to return calls.
5. **Procrastinating.** *Suggestions:* Get those unpleasant chores done first—if they're important. Divide large tasks into smaller ones. Reward yourself when you accomplish something.

—Communication Briefings

"Life is not measured by the breath you take. It is measured by the moments that take your breath away."

—Anonymous

Points of Light Award



Congratulations to **David Parsons** who was a recipient of The Governor's Points of Light Award, which recognizes individuals and organizations for their dedication, commitment, and determination in promoting and supporting volunteerism throughout Nevada. It is the highest honor bestowed by the Nevada Commission for National & Community Service (NCNCS) and the state of Nevada with the purpose of inspiring individuals to make a positive impact in the lives of people who need it most. David is one of the nation's strongest veterans advocates. He has logged more than 5,000 hours serving the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System, chairing and participating in countless events, and raising funds for veterans. At a banquet on October 16, Governor Kenny Guinn presented David with a trophy, congressional certificates, and a \$500 check to be given to the charity of his choice, which, of course, is the General Purpose Fund for veterans.

— Submitted by Priscilla Davis, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Southern Nevada Health Care System

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."

— **Franklin Roosevelt**

Volunteer For Health



Volunteers may themselves derive health benefits such as a sense of well being through positive social interaction with others and/or from the physical activity that their volunteering can enable individuals to utilize their skills and knowledge to benefit the community. Volunteers may also acquire new skills and experiences for personal benefit and development.

— *The Healing Power of Service,*
by Edward Brown

A Refreshing and Interesting Donation....

At the Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany, New York, a World War II veteran and an Ex-POW was celebrating his 80th birthday. He asked that in lieu of any gifts to him, that donations be made to the Albany Medical Center to cover needs of indigent veterans.

— Story submitted by Karen Haas,
Voluntary Service Program Manager

Welcome.....

We are happy to announce there has been a selection for the Chief Communications Officer, VACO, **Ev Chasen**. Mr. Chasen was previously Secretary Principi's Speechwriter in the Office of Public Affairs.



Ron Evans, Voluntary Service Specialist, VAMC, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Melanie "Nicki" Adams, Voluntary Service Specialist, and **Robert "Bob" Davis**, Administrative Officer, VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, Biloxi, Mississippi.

Marianne Davis, Program Manager, Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.



Food For Thought

The Whole Box and Dice: Don't think about recruitment as a stand-alone issue. Everything your organization does impacts on how successful you'll be at recruiting volunteers. The image that you present to the public, the type of work you allocate to volunteers, how your paid staff treat them, and the training, supervision and recognition you give them must all be part of your recruitment plan.

The Line Of Least Resistance: If you have paid staff who are resistant to working with volunteers, there are things that you can do. Use your advisory group to involve staff in planning and decision making about volunteer recruitment. Encourage staff to mentor volunteers and include volunteer management tips in your staff sessions.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*From
The VA Voluntary Service Staff,
VA Central Office*

The Last Hoorah (All Good Things Must Come To An End):

As many of you are aware that this is my last month as the Voluntary Service Specialist, VAVS Central Office. I am accepting a much more demanding role (and the pay is much less, but from what I understand, is very rewarding) as a **full time** wife, mother, grandmother, and daughter, (and if time allows) a volunteer.

My retirement is effective November 30, 2003.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to a few who have made my experience with Voluntary Service truly invaluable and certainly unforgettable. First to Jim Delgado, Director of Voluntary Service, for his support and confidence, and for affording me the opportunity to work in VA Central Office. To Laura Balun for being an inspiration to all for her dedication to the Voluntary Service Program. To Floyd L. "Packy" Young, Temple, Texas (who now is retired, but was once the Chief, Voluntary Service, Temple, Texas) for always having faith

in me. To Sherry Hughes, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple, Texas, her confidence in me and with her words of encouragement. And last but by no means least is my family who have always been understanding and there to help in a pinch.

Also, I am grateful for all the assistance from Sarah, Bettie, Steve, Regina, Robbie, and to all the wonderful volunteers who I had the pleasure of working with.

Thanks again to ALL for a wonderful TIME!!
I can say that I had a ball!!!!!!

Diane Heffington



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